

Under the feudal system the duel was warmly patronised. The haughty barons, regardless of the principles of law and justice, considered their sword as the avenger of their wrongs. They were ignorant and untractable, they were fierce, cruel and oppressive.—The administration of public justice was impeded by the force of private animosities. Every kingdom was distracted by the private quarrels and petty wars of a lawless aristocracy. War and the duel were the ruling passions, to which all considerations—of religion, justice and humanity—were made to bend. In this state of things, a few, possessed of more enlightened views and better principles, endeavored to control this torrent of unprincipled courage and military violence: hence originated chivalry, which modified, although it increased, the practice of duelling. Chivalry tended much to soften the manners of the age in which it originated;—it taught mankind to carry the civilities of peace into the operations of war, and to mingle politeness with the use of the sword;—it roused the soul from its lethargy, and invigorated the human character: but, while it produced these effects, it gave birth to *punctilious* refinement, and sowed the first seeds of fantastic honor—the bitterness of whose fruits is still felt in the modern duel. Every youth of distinction, being trained in the school of honor, was taught to consider military fame and personal valor as the only source of glory; and to preserve this valor from degenerating into brute force, a new code of punctilious observances was introduced, on the principles of which the laws of modern valor are founded. At all the banquets of the great, feats of personal valor were exhibited; tilts and tournaments were the common spirits of the age; and those combats were often countenanced by the presence of the prince and his whole court. These tournaments continued long in high estimation; but the death of Henry II., who was killed in one of them, gave a death-blow to their progress; and the renown of chivalry, it is said, fell with that monarch, to rise no more, except in the tales of romance. The duel was not stopped at the same time; for it had risen to such a height as to call for the interference of public authority; and about this period, the challenge of Francis I. to the Emperor Charles V. countenanced the practice. From that time, the single combat, on private and personal injuries, increased with rapidity; and an unguarded word, a haughty look and a disdainful carriage were often productive of the most fatal consequences. From this period is dated the origin of the modern duel. The subjects of Francis now indulged their propensity for the single combat, under the countenance and injunction of their monarch.—The foolish custom raged, notwithstanding the efforts of popes, bishops, general councils, princes and kings to abolish it, from this time and the reign of Philip the Fair, at the close of the 13th century, to the age of Henry IV., who, in his edict at Blois, in 1602, mentions that the disorders arising from the fighting of duels were so great, and so much Christian blood was spilt by them, that he could not